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Gingrich's Gurus

CREATING A NEW CIVILIZATION:
THE POLITICS OF THE THIRD WAVE
Alvin and Heidi Toffler
Foreword by Newt Gingrich
Turner Publishing, 1995, 112 pp.

Newt Gingrich claims that "Alvin and Heidi Toffler have given us the key to viewing current disarray within the positive framework of a dynamic, exciting future" (p. 14). The book, he thinks, "is an effort to empower citizens like yourself to truly take the leap and begin to invent a Third Wave civilization" (p. 17).

Though of course reluctant to disagree with so august a personage as the Speaker of the House, I cannot share his high opinion of this book. The Tofflers, like Karl Marx, think that technology determines history. But Marx got the details wrong. The Tofflers claim that industrial development does not inevitably pave the way to socialism, as he thought; instead, the growth of computers and other types of "open knowledge" will lead to a new type of society. "Third Wave" thinking has now superseded Second Wave industrialism, on which both old-fashioned

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capitalism and socialism are based. (First Wave or agricultural civilization is even more outmoded.)

In predicting the increased importance of computers, the Tofflers occupy the firm ground of those seers who prognosticate by projecting the immediate past into the future. But they nowhere show that growth in information has the revolutionary effects on society that they postulate. *Why* must changes in technology alter the structure of the family, make nationalism obsolete, and require us to abandon traditional morality?

Their predictions are banal, their social theory unfounded and simplistic, and their recommendations for political change more than a little sinister.

They condemn those who "appeal to nostalgia in their rhetoric about culture and values, as though one could return to the values and morality of the 1950s—a time before universal television, before the birth-control pill, before commercial jet aviation, satellites and home computers—without also returning to the mass industrial society of the Second Wave" (p. 77). How do satellites change morality? The all-determining influence of technology operates in the Tofflers' system as an unquestioned axiom.

If their predictions are banal, and their social theory unfounded and simplistic, their recommendations for political change are more than a little sinister. Although constantly calling for decentralization, they also complain that we are "politically primitive and undeveloped" at the "transnational level." Decisions must be transferred "up" from the nation-state (p. 100). Translating the Tofflers' Third Wave argot into English, this is a call for global government. Not surprisingly, those who oppose Nafta are prisoners of the outmoded Second Wave.

Although our authors say some commendably harsh things about socialism, they by no means

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advocate the free market. Massive job retraining and new forms of collective bargaining are the order of the day: to think otherwise is of course to be enmeshed in Second Wave Thought (p. 53).

But what exactly the anticipatory democracy that they, and Newt Gingrich, see in store for us consists of, they mostly leave vague. To demand specifics is no doubt to fall victim to the discredited analytic approach, pioneered by Descartes (p. 60). These Third Wave thinkers, who take a "systemic or integrative view," have transcended old-fashioned logic.

Readers will have no difficulty in gauging the quality of the Tofflers' intelligence, or the intelligence of those who recommend them.

Creating a New Civilization contains many more gems. We learn, e.g., that St. Augustine thought that those who could add or subtract had made a covenant with the Devil (p. 35). But enough. Readers will have no difficulty in gauging the quality of the Tofflers' intelligence, or the intelligence of those who recommend them. This is not a book, but a symptom. ❖

America's Many Propositions

ORIGINAL INTENTIONS:
ON THE MAKING AND
RATIFICATION OF THE UNITED
STATES CONSTITUTION
M.E. Bradford
University of Georgia Press, 1993,
xxiv + 165 pp.

By profession M. E. Bradford was a literary scholar, and *Original Intentions*, issued shortly after his untimely death, manifests his sure touch for the nuances of words. We can already see Mel Bradford in action by the second word of his title—not "intention" but "intentions."

By using the plural, Bradford called attention to a fundamental fact about the U.S. Constitution. Diverse persons and groups, both in the Constitutional Convention and the state ratification conventions, had various purposes in mind in their advocacy of the new charter of government. One cannot then assume that the views of any particular Framer have been enacted into law.

Bradford applies this precept to no less than James Madison, the "protagonist" of the convention (p. 1). Madison arrived at the Convention a strong centralizer; and his

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Virginia Plan, introduced through his follower Edmund Randolph, would have allowed the larger states to dominate a powerful national legislature. Although, through shrewd maneuvers and the favor of George Washington, Madison succeeded in having his plan placed on the convention's agenda, he soon discovered that he could not force his designs upon delegates for the most part much less centralist than he was.

Though the Convention proposed the Constitution, it did not institute the new regime. That task belonged to the state conventions.

Madison at first failed to grasp the extent of resistance to his centralizing designs, and the convention neared collapse. "That he [Madison] was listening to other music instead of the baleful iteration of these predictions of adjournment *sine die* can be demonstrated by his functional indifference to the structure of the Great Convention itself. For he failed to treat it as an assembly representing the people of the states" (p. 9). Only when Madison came to recognize that most delegates did not want the basic framework of their way of life to be tampered with could the convention proceed.

I have dealt in some detail with Bradford's initial essay as it illustrates the basic features of his historical method. Like the great historian of Rome Sir Ronald Syme, he relied heavily on collective biography. With immense labor, he investigated the lives of as many as possible of the convention's delegates. His Constitution, unlike that, say, of Harry Jaffa, was informed not only by the views of James Madison, but by those of Roger Sherman, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, and William Samuel Johnson as well.

Bradford possessed a keen logical mind, and his method avoids a fallacy into which lesser writers often fall. One frequently sees arguments of this form: (1) someone (e.g., Jefferson, Madison) was the principal author of a document (e.g., the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution); (2) the person in question held views of a particular character; (3) therefore, these views can be used to specify the fundamental intent of the document.

After Bradford's work, the fallacy in this line of thought should be apparent. If a document has more than one author, or is adopted by a group, only views shared by the group can be imputed to the

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document. And, as Bradford went on to argue, matters are yet more complicated.

Even if one knew the views of all delegates to the Constitutional Convention, the work of interpretation has just begun. Though the Convention proposed the Constitution, it did not institute the new regime. That task belonged to the state conventions that ratified the Constitution, and thus the intentions of the delegates to those conventions must be taken as authoritative. To construct a detailed picture of all the state conventions is a Herculean task, but it was not beyond Bradford's powers. In chapters on the ratifying conventions of Massachusetts, South Carolina, and North Carolina, he presents the results of his painstaking investigations.

The dominant desire of the Framers and ratifiers of the Constitution was to maintain the settled ways of the past rather than impose some new philosophical scheme.

Like King Lear, Bradford could say, "I will teach you differences." He stresses always the influence of the local, and the effects of seemingly minor events. Had the state conventions been held in a different order, he speculates, the Constitution might well have failed of adoption.

Some generalizations can, however, be ventured. "That the powers of the new government are few and explicit is in the ratifying conventions the central theme of the Federalist defense of the United States Constitution and a primary explanation of why the sequence of ratification went as it did" (p. 41).

The dominant desire of the Framers and ratifiers of the Constitution was to maintain the settled ways of the past rather than impose some new philosophical scheme. Not for Bradford is the Straussian view that the Framers were enlightenment philosophers who wished to establish a new order based on rationalist principles. Quite the contrary, Bradford finds the British Constitution of 1688 their principal model. "For early English constitutional history is a universe of discourse, a structure of values inherent in the language of its expression that is the opposite of metaphysical speech concerning abstract moral principles and ideal regimes" (p. 33).

Elsewhere, Bradford applies his biographical method to other

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historical issues. In "Religion and the Framers" he argues that the current Supreme Court's understanding of the establishment clause of the First Amendment ignores the intent of the Congress that proposed it. Once again, he works by careful building up of biographical detail and attention to the particularities of debate. In "Changed Only a Little" he deploys his method to challenge the view that the Reconstruction Amendments fundamentally altered the Constitution.

Though Bradford opposed fitting history to a Procrustean bed of philosophy, he was himself a philosophical intelligence of considerable stature; and his protests against improper philosophizing have themselves a deeper end in view. Bradford feared the imposition of what, following Michael Oakeshott, he terms a teleocratic political order. This sort of regime subordinates politics to some overarching goal—such as, to take an example not at random, equality. The governing powers need observe no limits in pursuit of their end; and the result, inevitably, is despotism. Instead, Bradford directed the full force of his scholarship and personality toward the promotion of a nomocratic order—a system that operates by fixed rules of procedure, never to be set aside.

M. E. Bradford was a scholar of immense gifts, devoted to the cause of liberty. Though he was denied in life the full recognition that he deserved, he could apply to himself the words of Browning's Paracelsus: "But after, they will know me." ❖

Not Even Scholars Are Equal

ORIGINAL INTENT AND THE FRAMERS OF THE CONSTITUTION
Harry V. Jaffa
Regnery Gateway, 1994, xv + 408 pp.

Peter Abelard confounded the readers of *Sic et Non* by placing side-by-side opinions of the Church Fathers that seemed contradictory, while offering no reconciliation. Harry Jaffa has done him one better. Much of his *Original Intent* consists of contradictory opinions of his own, without excuse or explanation.

As Jaffa sees matters, many alleged conservatives misunderstand original intent. They attack liberal Supreme Court Justices such as William Brennan for reading into the Constitution their own value judgments. Instead, they urge, judges should confine themselves to the text as meant by its Framers.

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To Jaffa, this conservative approach, like the view it ostensibly opposes, is a variety of moral relativism. It offers no reason why the text of the Constitution should be taken as authoritative. Instead, a correct method of interpretation will read the Constitution in the light of its fundamental principles, as stated in the Declaration of Independence.

The alleged basic principle of morality commits one to no concrete action at all.

The "all men are created equal" clause of the Declaration, in particular, underlies the American system and in Jaffa's mind should exercise decisive force in all matters constitutional. It encapsulates the basic principle of natural law, and only by recourse to it can the snares of relativism and legal positivism be avoided. Abraham Lincoln, for Jaffa a figure of superhuman proportions, best understood the Constitution's inner meaning. He saw that, fundamentally, the Constitution takes slavery to be immoral, its compromises with that institution notwithstanding. Lincoln correctly maintained that the Constitution intends slavery to be in the "course of ultimate extinction."

Jaffa shows himself well aware of a crucial objection to his reading of the Declaration. If the equality clause mandates the abolition of slavery, why did many signers of the Declaration, including of course Jefferson, hold slaves? No problem, Jaffa responds: the signers realized that it would be practically impossible to abolish slavery immediately. Instead, the equality clause states an ideal to be approached, as prudence best dictates, in the course of time.

In other words, the alleged basic principle of morality commits one to no concrete action at all. "Lincolnian morality—the morality of the Founding Fathers—was prudential . . . we cannot decide upon an intelligent policy to deal with slavery, unless we know that slavery, in principle, is morally wrong. But knowing that it is wrong does not, of itself, tell us what to do about it" (p. 29).

Thus, the signers of the Declaration could, in Jaffa's view, consistently join absolute rejection of slavery with slaveholding. Jaffa does not tell us why, if practical exigencies made the advocacy of immediate abolition impossible, the anti-slavery signers did not state their commitment to a more gradual program. Was this, too, unprudential? Why, if, as Jaffa

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maintains, belief in the immorality of slavery was widespread, even in the South?

Jaffa, the supposed defender of morality against relativism, in fact supports principles that are empty of content until some wise statesmen, quintessentially Lincoln, deigns to fill in the blanks as he wishes. To think that moral principles have prescriptive force in all circumstances makes one a Kantian, heedless of consequences. "Prudential morality means doing the most good, or the least evil, in any given situation. As Lincoln once said, 'I would consent to any great evil, to avoid a greater one'" (p. 29). Nothing, then, is intrinsically evil, if one credits Jaffa with meaning what he says. You may cheat, steal, or murder, if by so doing, you prevent a greater evil. Why he attributes his prudential view to Aquinas, who taught that some acts are always wrong, escapes me.

Jaffa will no doubt respond that I am a moral relativist, if not a dread Calhounite.

Jaffa will no doubt respond that I am a moral relativist, if not a dread Calhounite. How can anyone fail to see that there is a clear proof, starting from self-evident premises, that slavery violates natural law? Unfortunately, Jaffa never sets out this proof rigorously; at most he gestures at an argument. His basic point seems to be that human beings do not differ from one another as do men from animals, or men from God. Thus, it is wrong to treat human beings as if they were beasts and not persons.

Jaffa appears to believe that from the mere recognition that human beings and beasts differ in nature, some proposition about the immorality of slavery follows; he thinks that those who question this cannot acknowledge that human beings have a distinct essence. Why not? I wish Jaffa would state his inference explicitly: vague comments about the invalidity of the fact-value distinction will not suffice.

But suppose my criticism is mistaken: then we know, don't we, that slavery is wrong. Or do we? Jaffa also tells us, appealing to the authority of his teacher Leo Strauss, that there is an unsolvable conflict "between Jerusalem and Athens—between revelation and reason" (p. 351). We are left then in skepticism: we cannot know with certainty the ultimate truth about the world. (Incidentally, how do Strauss and Jaffa know this?) But, if so, how can we claim to have "self-evident" demonstrations of

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the moral truth of equality? Certainly some have interpreted the claims of revelation differently. Who is Jaffa to say that they are wrong? And, by his own statement, he cannot demonstrate that revelation is invalid. (I pass over his attempt to deduce equality from the Golden Rule as unworthy of comment.)

So far, then, we have a morality that commits one to nothing and a self-evident demonstration founded on skepticism. But Jaffa is not yet done. He tells us that the equality clause is basic to the proper interpretation of the Constitution. And yet he readily acknowledges that several provisions of the Constitution appear to sanction slavery. The fugitive slave clause is the "most powerful evidence of slavery within the Constitution. . . . For not only does it give federal constitutional recognition to the law of chattel slavery within the slave states, but it requires the government of the United States to assist in the enforcement of that law" (p. 65).

Further, the clause guaranteeing to the states a republican form of government "implies that every state then existing was already republican. It implies thereby not only that there was no 'intolerable' conflict between slavery and republicanism, but that there was no conflict at all" (p. 66).

Faced with such facts, one might think the appropriate response obvious. Should not Jaffa abandon his claim that the Constitution incorporates his understanding of equality? But, as we have already abundantly seen, Jaffa is no ordinary man. He responds by drawing a distinction between principles and compromises. The provisions that allow slavery are mere compromises, inconsistent with the Constitution's principles: they may be set aside as the prudence of the true statesman dictates.

Jaffa gives no argument that the provisions he terms "compromises" were intended to have less force than anything else in the Constitution; nevertheless, he is certain that he has grasped the true intent of its Framers. The explicit provisions of the document are to be read in terms of a principle, equality, that never appears there. Nothing must be allowed to interfere with Jaffa's Transcendental Deduction of Abraham Lincoln.

Jaffa's book rests on a fundamental misconception. He acts as if only two alternatives exist: accept his version of natural law or embrace moral relativism. But why can there not be an objective morality that arrives at different conclusions from Jaffa? Why is he so sure that Calhoun, e.g., did not believe in rights apart from interests? Many Southerners (and some Northerners) at the time of the Civil War believed that the Bible allows slavery. Were all of them

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moral relativists? For all that Jaffa has shown, one can even accept natural law ethics and think slavery sometimes licit. St. Thomas Aquinas, whose standing to expound natural law is at least equal to Jaffa's, held this position (I hasten to add that I am here concerned with Jaffa's arguments, not the morality of slavery).

Jaffa seems incapable of proceeding for more than a few pages without tripping up. He claims, though in more muted form than elsewhere, that Alexander Stephens's "Cornerstone Speech" was influenced by Darwin's *Origin of Species*, a work that says nothing about human races or evolution (p. 48). He finds the three-fifths clause of the Constitution contradictory: "how can three-fifths of a person be counted, when there is no such thing in nature" (p. 64)? Perhaps Jaffa will find faulty a recipe that calls for a half-teaspoon of sugar, since there are no such things in nature as half-teaspoons.

I have every confidence that regardless of what I, or any other critic, has to say to Professor Jaffa, nothing will disturb his belief that he is one of the blessed possessors of political truth. ❖

Subscription: $16 for four issues.

Rothbard's Last Triumph

AN AUSTRIAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE HISTORY OF ECONOMIC THOUGHT, VOLUME I: ECONOMIC THOUGHT BEFORE ADAM SMITH
Murray N. Rothbard
Edward Elgar, 1995, xvi + 556 pp.

Murray Rothbard tells us that this gigantic work was first envisioned as a "standard Adam Smith-to-the-present moderately sized book, a sort of contra-[Robert] Heilbroner" (p. xv). When we see what has emerged from that plan, a parallel at once springs to mind. Cervantes began *Don Quixote* as a short story, according to Ramón Menéndez-Pidal; but he gradually expanded it into one of the great books of the world.[1] Likewise, the "moderately-sized book" has become one of the great intellectual enterprises of our age.

For Rothbard, the history of economics has an unusually broad scope. To him it include not only economic theory but virtually all of

[1]Most contemporary scholars reject this theory, although my own teacher, Walter Starkie, accepted it.

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intellectual history as well. As he often did in conversation, Murray Rothbard here advances definite and well-thought out interpretations of major historical controversies.

As an example, Machiavelli was in his view a "preacher of evil"—not for him the fashionable portrayal of the Florentine as the founder of value-free political science (p. 189). With characteristic acuity, Rothbard asks: "Who in the history of the world, after all, and outside a Dr. Fu Manchu novel, has actually lauded evil *per se* and counselled evil and vice at every step of life's way? Preaching evil is to counsel precisely as Machiavelli has done: be good so long as goodness doesn't get in the way of something you want, in the case of the ruler that something being the maintenance and expansion of power" (p. 190).

For Rothbard, the history of economics includes not only economic theory but virtually all of intellectual history as well.

And he concludes his discussion with a stinging rebuke to modern political scientists, who "eschew moral principle as being 'unscientific' and therefore outside their sphere of interest" (p. 192).

Rothbard firmly rejects the Weber thesis, according to which the "inner-worldly asceticism" that Calvinism encouraged played a key role in the rise of modern capitalism. Capitalism began long before Calvinism; and the stress upon "God and profit" that Weber found distinctively Protestant was present in the Catholic Middle Ages.

For the Weber thesis, Rothbard substitutes another contrast between Catholics and Protestants, here following Emil Kauder. The Calvinist stress on the calling led to emphasis on work and saving and distrust of consumption: Catholic Europe, in the Aristotelian and scholastic tradition, found nothing wrong with consumption. This difference led to a crucial split in the growth of economics, between utility and cost-of-production theories of price.

I fear that readers will have become impatient because I have yet to treat economic theory. But one last topic before doing so, covered in what to my mind is the single most brilliant page in Rothbard's two volumes. With a few bold strokes, Rothbard demolishes oceans of misinterpretation about the quarrel between the ancients and moderns. "The pitting of 'tradition' vs. 'modernity' is largely an artificial antithesis. 'Moderns' like Locke or perhaps even Hobbes may have

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been individualists and 'right-thinkers,' but they were also steeped in scholasticism and natural law" (p. 314).

Further, on the same page our author strikes at another theory of vast but unmerited influence. "Neither are John Pocock and his followers convincing in trying to posit an artificial distinction and clash between the libertarian concerns of Locke or his later followers on the one hand, and devotion to 'classical virtue' on the other . . . why can't libertarians and opposers of government intervention also oppose government 'corruption' and extravagance? Indeed, the two generally go together" (p. 314). I wish that everyone interested in European history would study this marvelous page.

Rothbard firmly opposes the Whig view of the history of economics, in which "later" is inevitably "better," thus rendering the study of the past unnecessary. In his view, much of economics consists of wrong turnings; and the present volume ends with a tale of decline that will surprise many readers. Yet paradoxically, Rothbard's own method is in another way Whiggish itself. He has his own firmly held positions on correct economic theory, based on his surpassing command of Austrian economics. He accordingly is anxious to see how various figures anticipate key Austrian themes or, on the contrary, pursue blind alleys.

The dominant theme in Rothbard's appraisal of economics is the nature of value.

The dominant theme in Rothbard's appraisal of economics is the nature of value. Economic actors, endeavoring to better their own position, guide themselves by their subjective appraisals of goods and services. The pursuit of an "objective" measure of value is futile: what influence can such an alleged criterion have, unless it is reflected in the minds of economic agents?

Rothbard especially emphasizes, in this connection, the so-called paradox of value. How can it be that water costs little or nothing while gold is extraordinarily expensive? Life cannot exist without the former, while the latter is the merest luxury. The answer, fully developed by the Austrian school, depends on the fact that subjective appraisals of particular units of a good, not the supposed value of the whole stock of the good, determined price. Since water is abundant while gold is scarce, there is no anomaly at all in the greater price of the latter.

Our author never fails to praise those who reach or approach this

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insight. The scholastics fare especially well: Pierre de Jean Olivi, e.g., realized that the "important factor in determining price is *complacibilitas*, or subjective utility, the subjective desirability of a product to the individual consumers. . . . utility, in the determination of price, is relative to supply and not absolute" (p. 61). Again, he lauds Jean Buridan for extending the subjective utility analysis to money (p. 74).

A key corollary of the subjectivist position is that an exchange does *not* consist of an equality: each party values more highly what he obtains than what he surrenders. Those who miss the point arouse our author to protest. Even Aristotle, whom he much admires as a philosopher, does not escape censure: "Aristotle's famous discussion of reciprocity in exchange in Book V of his *Nicomachean Ethics* is a prime example of descent into gibberish. Aristotle talks of a builder exchanging a house for the shoes produced by a shoemaker. He then writes: 'the number of shoes exchanged for a house must therefore correspond to the ratio of builder to shoemaker. . . .' How eh? can there possibly be a ratio of 'builder' to 'shoemaker'?" (p. 16). Those who knew Murray Rothbard can almost hear him asking this.

The subjectivist insight by no means died with the close of the Middle Ages. On the contrary, the School of Salamanca upheld it in the sixteenth century; and in the eighteenth, Cantillon and Turgot considerably extended it. But the path of economics was not one of continued progress. Theory suffered a major setback through the work of one of Rothbard's main villains, Adam Smith.

Far from being the founder of economics, Smith in the eyes of Rothbard was almost its gravedigger. Although Smith in his classroom lectures solved the paradox of value in standard subjectivist fashion, "in the *Wealth of Nations*, for some bizarre reason, all this drops out and falls away" (p. 449). Smith threw out subjective utility and instead sought to explain price through labor cost. Because of Smith's mistake, the "great tradition [of subjectivism] gets poured down the Orwellian memory hole" (p. 450).

Rothbard's discussion of utility constitutes only one strand in his powerfully argued case that Smith derailed economics from the analytical achievements of the scholastics and their French and Italian successors. And even in the discussion of utility, I have had to omit much. (The brilliant dissection of Daniel Bernoulli's mathematical approach to utility [pp. 380–81], e.g., should not be missed). But no review can do justice to the scores and scores of insights and scholarly discoveries in this volume. ❖

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AN AUSTRIAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE HISTORY OF ECONOMIC THOUGHT, VOLUME II: CLASSICAL ECONOMICS
Murray N. Rothbard
Edward Elgar, 1995, xvi + 556 pp.

The reader of this volume will at once face a puzzle: how was one person able to unify so vast a mass of material into a tightly organized narrative? I cannot pretend to provide a full answer, but one part of the solution lies in the fact that Rothbard follows a few main themes with iron consistency.

One of these central themes emerges in the book's initial chapter: "J.B. Say: the French Tradition in Smithian Clothing." Jean-Baptiste Say, far from being a mere popularizer of Adam Smith, "was the first economist to think deeply about the proper methodology of his discipline, and to base his work, as far as he could, upon that methodology" (p. 12).

And what is the procedure that Say advocated? One starts from certain "general facts" that are incontestably known to be true. From these, the economist reasons deductively. Since the beginning axioms are true, whatever is validly deduced from them also is true. Here, in brief compass, Say discovered the praxeological method that came to full fruition in the work of Mises and Rothbard himself.

To understand praxeology, a key point about the initial axioms must be kept in mind. The starting points are common sense, "obvious" truths, e.g., that people engage in exchange in order to benefit themselves. The economist should not begin from oversimplified hypotheses about the economy as a whole, chosen because convenient for mathematical manipulation. To adopt this wrong method was the besetting vice of the economics of David Ricardo, the main impediment, in Rothbard's view, to the development of economic science in the nineteenth century.

This conflict of method had a fundamental effect on the content of Say's and Ricardo's economics. Say began from the individual in action, the subject of the common sense propositions he took to be axiomatic. Thus, Say placed great emphasis on the entrepreneur. One cannot assume that the economy automatically adjusts itself: only by the foresight of those able and willing to take risks can production be allocated efficiently. "It seems to us that Say is foursquare in the Cantillon-Turgot tradition of the entrepreneur as forecaster and risk-bearer" (p. 26).

Again, Say's stress on the individual underlies his analysis of taxation, which Rothbard rates among his greatest contributions.

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Some, including notoriously Adam Smith, consider taxes a way to benefit the public; but Say would have nothing of this nonsense. Taxation, in essence, is theft: the government forcibly seizes property from its rightful owners. If the powers-that-be then condescend to spend some of their ill-gotten gains for the "public benefit," they are in reality purchasing people's goods with the people's own money. Taxation, accordingly, should be as low as possible: the search of Smith and his followers for "canons of justice" in taxation must be rejected. Rothbard characteristically adds: why have any taxes at all?

Taxation, in essence, is theft: the government forcibly seizes property from its rightful owners.

As any reader will discover after a few pages, Rothbard spurns the desiccated neutrality of much contemporary pseudo-science. He has his heroes and villains, chosen not by arbitrary preference but according to his carefully reasoned conception of economic principles. Yet he is no uncritical partisan of his heroes: he is a master of the fine discriminations that Dr. Leavis has taught us characterize the great critic.

When, we turn to Rothbard on Ricardo, the atmosphere is entirely different. Once again, our author reverses conventional opinion. Say was not a popularizer, but a great economist; likewise, Ricardo was not the first truly scientific economist. His much-praised logic is "verbal mathematics" that fundamentally misconceives economics. "Ricardo was stuck with a hopeless problem: he had four variables, but only one equation with which to solve them: Total output (or income) = rent + profits + wages. To solve, or rather pretend to solve, this equation, Ricardo had to 'determine' one or more of these entities from outside his equation, and in such a way as to leave others as residuals" (p. 82).

Rothbard explains with crystal clarity the path by which Ricardo sought to escape. He simply held fixed as many of his variables as he could: by oversimplified assumptions, he could "solve" his equations. In particular, he adopted a theory of rent based on differential productivity, which Rothbard neatly skewers; and he made price largely a function of the quantity of labor time embodied in a commodity's production.

Ricardo's labor theory of value had a consequence that would no doubt have shocked its author: it paved the way for Marxism.

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"Marx found a crucial key to this mechanism [by which the capitalist class would be expropriated] in Ricardo's labor theory of value, and in the Ricardian socialist thesis that labor is the sole determinant of value, with capital's share, or profits, being the 'surplus value' extracted by the capitalist from labor's created product" (p. 409). And with his stress on the Ricardian roots of Marxism, Rothbard begins a devastating assault on "scientific socialism," the like of which has not been seen since Böhm-Bawerk.

Marx, through Hegel, presented a secularized version of a witches' brew.

As Rothbard notes, Marx's economics falls into error from the start. Marx assumed that in an exchange, the commodities traded have equal value. Moreover, he took this postulated equality in a very strong sense: both of the goods must be identical to some third thing. This, by spurious reasoning that Rothbard deftly exposes, he claimed could only be labor.

But the flaw in Marx's derivation does not lie in the details of his argument. A *leitmotif* of Rothbard's work is that an exchange consists not of an equality, but rather of a double inequality. Marx's whole edifice thus rests on a spurious assumption, and the three volumes of *Das Kapital* constitute an elaborate attempt to conjure a solution to a non-existent problem.

But the difficulties of Marxist economics are not confined to its starting point. Rothbard points out that Marx's theory of wage determination really applies not to capitalism but to slavery. "Oddly, neither Marx nor his critics ever realized that there is one place in the economy where the Marxist theory of exploitation and surplus value *does* apply: not to the capitalist-worker relation in the market, but to the relation of master and slave under slavery. Since the masters own the slaves, they indeed only pay them their subsistence wage: enough to live on and reproduce, while the masters pocket the surplus of the slaves' marginal product over their cost of subsistence" (p. 393).

Rothbard does not confine his assault on Marxism to an exposure of its economic fallacies. Behind the economics of Marxism, he finds a heretical religious myth, the goal of which is "the obliteration of the individual through 'reunion' with God, the One, and the ending of cosmic 'alienation', at least on the level of each individual" (p. 351).

One might at first think that abstruse theosophical speculations that date back to Plotinus have little to do with Marxism. But

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Rothbard convincingly shows that Marx, through the intermediary of Hegel, presented a secularized version of this witches' brew in the guise of "scientific socialism." In the course of doing so, Rothbard makes Hegel's philosophy seem amusing; his remarks on the "cosmic blob" are worthy of Mencken (p. 349). Rothbard's analysis of Marx's philosophy re-enforces the pioneering investigations of Eric Voegelin; this parallel between the conclusions of these two great scholars is all the more remarkable in that Rothbard, though familiar with Voegelin, was not deeply influenced by him.

So filled with material is the book that one could easily write another detailed review stressing entirely different parts of it, such as the long and learned account of the bullionist controversy. I shall, with regret, confine myself to two final items. In his discussion of utilitarianism, Rothbard's philosophical turn of mind is evident. He notes that according to that system, reason "is only a hand-maiden, a slave to the passions. . . . But what, then, is to be done about the fact that most people decide on their ends by ethical principles, which cannot be considered reducible to an original personal emotion" (p. 57)?

Rothbard has here rediscovered an objection to utilitarianism raised by Archbishop Whately: how can utilitarianism accommodate preferences based on competing ethical systems? John Stuart Mill, though familiar with the objection, never answered it in a convincing way.

I cannot resist ending with Rothbard's assessment of Mill: "John Stuart was the quintessence of soft rather than hardcore, a woolly minded man of mush in striking contrast to his steel-edged father. . . . John Stuart Mill's enormous popularity and stature in the British intellectual world was partially due to his very mush-headedness" (p. 277).

You will not elsewhere encounter an intellectual historian who writes like that. Murray Rothbard's two volumes are a monument of twentieth-century scholarship. ❖

An Unfaithful Companion

THE ELGAR COMPANION
TO AUSTRIAN ECONOMICS
Edited by Peter J. Boettke
Edward Elgar, 1994, xvii + 628 pp.

This entry in Edward Elgar's Companion Series purports to be a survey and guide to modern Austrian economics. It contains eighty-seven articles on a variety of topics related to the Austrian School. When

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faced with a book of eighty-seven articles, the reader confronts a problem—where to begin? Articles by Professor Don Lavoie of George Mason University never fail to astonish, and so I at once found my way to his "The Interpretive Turn." I was not disappointed.

Lavoie has uncovered a crucial defect in the way many Austrians discuss valuation: "Subjectivism is often expressed by Austrians in mentalistic terms. Subjective tastes are 'in the mind' of the actor; subjective cost is the next most valued option the actor had in mind at the moment of choice." This statement about subjective tastes "is mired in the metaphysical view that all I can be certain of is what is self-evident to my own mind, and that, in order to interact with others, I need to take it on faith that other minds are constituted like mine." On this view Lavoie believes, "the cost of an action would appear to involve some kind of mysterious mind-reading process." Instead, Austrians should move "away from the Cartesian model of the isolated individual mind, and towards the notion of intersubjectivity and language . . . meaning is not inaccessibly buried in the private recesses of isolated minds; it is publicly available in all sorts of readable texts" (p. 57).

Few passages have in recent years puzzled me so much as this. Does Lavoie really think that preferences are not mental? That, for example, when I prefer vanilla to chocolate ice cream, nothing is going on in my mind? Lavoie of course is right that there are all sorts of difficult questions, raised by Wittgenstein and others, about how one has access to someone else's thoughts; but surely it is the very midsummer of madness to deny that preferences are mental at all. Is my preference for vanilla ice cream, if I may revert to a topic I find far more congenial than Lavoie's lucubrations, in a *text*? Who wrote it, and where can it be purchased?

And why does Lavoie think that to recognize that preferences are mental commits one to a Cartesian position? Descartes held that mind and body are separate but interacting substances: what does this have to do with the simple acknowledgement that preference is "in the mind"? Incidentally, Descartes did not think it rested on faith that there are other minds; but to pursue at length Lavoie's interpretation of Cartesian philosophy would prove an unprofitable enterprise.

Methodological individualism, as usually understood, fares no better at the hands of our philosophical revolutionary. "To be sure, society is composed of individuals, but just as surely individuals are composed of society. The claim

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that the action of an isolated actor is fundamentally simpler than social action is not convincing" (p. 58). What society I am composed of? the United States? Russia? Or does Lavoie mean only that individuals are influenced by society? But who ever denied that? Who are the dreaded "atomists" and "Cartesians" that so arouse Lavoie's ire?

As one might expect, Crusoe economics, like the individual, must be banished; neither can be admitted into an up-to-date Austrianism based on "phenomenological hermeneutics."

As one might expect, Crusoe economics, like the individual mind, must be banished; neither can be admitted into an up-to-date Austrianism based on "phenomenological hermeneutics." "The Crusoe of the novel thinks in socially constituted categories; he is unquestionably the product of the British culture of his day. . . , thus Crusoe economics is either deceptive or incoherent" (p. 58). What nonsense! How has Lavoie managed to remain unaware that Crusoe examples do not take the genesis of thought as their subject?

Fortunately, the other contributors steer clear of the Cloud-Cuckoo land where Lavoie (one hopes temporarily) resides. But the volume elsewhere displays, if in a less extreme form, the dubious doctrines of the "radical subjectivists." David L. Prychitkto, in an entry entitled "Praxeology," has no use for the distinct methodological trait of the school: The claim that economics may be derived deductively from the self-evident axioms. "Austrian praxeology has failed to answer that apparently innocent, but troubling, [Bruce] Caldwell question—how does one choose between rival systems of thought that also claim to be deduced from absolutely true axioms?" (p. 81).

The Caldwell Question troubles me much less than it does Prychitko. I should have thought the answer obvious: one examines the rival systems, testing for logical validity in standard fashion and scrutinizing the axioms' alleged self-evidence. If the difficulty is supposed to be that both systems pass all the tests and thus leave the ground for choice obscure, one can respond only by denying that the supposition is coherent. If reason leads inevitably to contradiction, we might as well all close up shop.

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The objection Prychitko has raised, if in my view invalid, nevertheless is interesting. I cannot say the same for the following: "A scientist that claims he beholds timeless, absolute truth embodied by an irrefutable system of thought, no matter how sincere his beliefs may be, is a scientist who effectively closes himself off from discourse. The claim of 'apodictic certainty' tends to break down into a kicking, stomping, unreasonable and apoplectic certainty in the face of criticism" (p. 81). No doubt we have here the explanation for the proverbial violence of mathematicians and philosophers. These denizens of the a priori, faced with opposition, must at once don their brass knuckles.

No doubt we have here the explanation for the proverbial violence of mathematicians and philosophers.

Ralph Raico, in his superb "Classical Liberalism and the Austrian School" has a different view: "a rather odd claim of both T.W. Hutchinson and Milton Friedman may be mentioned. These authors have asserted that the strictly *a priori* approach of Mises and his followers (praxeology) is *incompatible* with the values and spirit of liberalism. Neither Hutchinson nor Friedman, however, has provided a sufficiently coherent argument to warrant, or even allow, serious rebuttal" (p. 322).

After perusal of Lavoie and Prychitko, it is a relief to turn to Barry Smith's "Aristotelianism, Apriorism, Essentialism." Smith maintains that Austrian economics has been for at least a hundred years, "the standardbearer of the Aristotelian methodology" (p. 33). Among the tenets of this position he includes "The world exists, independently of our thinking and reasoning. . . . We can know what the world is like, at least in its broad outlines, both via common sense and via scientific method" (pp. 33–34 emphasis omitted).

Methodology is but one of the volume's parts, and the work ranges widely over "Fields of Research," "Applied Economics and Public Policy," and "History of Thought and Alternative Schools and Approaches" as well. Obviously, only a few articles can be singled out for discussion. Peter Klein's "Mergers and the Market for Corporate Control" repays careful study. As Klein insightfully notes, Rothbard showed that the exigencies of monetary calculation place

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"an upper bound on the size of the firm" (p. 397). Further, Mises anticipated the central point of an influential article by Henry Manne on shareholders' limitation of managerial autonomy.

Another outstanding piece, though one I am unable entirely to agree with, is Leland Yeager's "Utilitarianism." Yeager spurns act-utilitarianism; instead, like Mises and Hazlitt before him, he makes the promotion of social cooperation "the indispensable means to what human beings find good for themselves individually and jointly" (p. 330). Yeager clearly has identified a central element in ethics, but I doubt that the sum and substance of morality can be derived from social cooperation alone. How, as an instance, does social cooperation bear on the rightness or wrongness of abortion?

The essays by Robert Batemarco and Peter Lewin on capital theory and the business cycle respectively are competent and welcome, and the cycle is discussed in a few other places. But why are so few pages allotted to discussion of Austrian macroeconomics? Did Hayek not merit the Nobel Prize for work on the Misesian theory of the business cycle? Did this theory, and related matters of capital and interest, not propel the Austrian school into new prominence? Is the Austrian theory of the interest rate so insignificant as to warrant no entry?

Why are so few pages allotted to discussion of Austrian macroeconomics? Did Hayek not merit the Nobel Prize for work on the Misesian theory of the business cycle?

The work includes essays on "Causation and Genetic Causation in Austrian Economics," "Self-organizing Systems," and "The Freiburg School of Law and Economics" but nothing on Fetter's theory of rent or Mises's money regression theorem and the discussions of it by, among others, Don Patinkin and Benjamin Anderson. Other oddities: the section entitled "Precursors and Alternatives" to the Austrian school includes two precursors and fifteen alternatives; the section on political philosophy contains nothing on natural rights.

In sum, the work is mistitled. It is not a *Companion to Austrian Economics* but rather a guide to an eccentric selection of topics that match the editor's foibles. ❖

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The Skeptic as Inquisitor

KINDLY INQUISITORS
Jonathan Rauch
University of Chicago Press, 1993.
A Cato Institute Book, xi + 178 pp.

According to journalist Jonathan Rauch, malign forces, subsumed under the categories Fundamentalists and Humanitarians, threaten freedom of thought and speech. Rauch hopes to thwart their nefarious plans by exploring the philosophical basis of freedom. Though one must applaud the ambition of this latter-day John Stuart Mill, he does the cause of free speech little good with his confused defense of skepticism.

Rauch fervently opposes what he terms the Fundamentalist Principle. Its adherents include, but are not confined, to religious believers. It states that "[t]hose who know the truth should decide who is right" (p. 6). Against this, Rauch counterposes the Liberal Principle: "Checking of each by each through public criticism is the only legitimate way to decide who is right." Perhaps this will convict me in Rauch's eyes of being a "true believer," but his Fundamentalist Principle strikes me as obviously correct. If someone must decide who is right, why not those who know the truth? Should it rather be those who don't know the truth?

But, Rauch will respond, this misses the issue. Just what he contends is that no one has privileged access to truth: we cannot know in advance that a certain person, or group of persons, is right. Here Rauch falls into confusion. If what he means is that one should not accept an unsupported claim by someone that he is the fountainhead of truth, that is one thing; but why need a Fundamentalist do so? Suppose, to take a case that seems particularly to arouse Rauch's ire, someone supports papal infallibility because he thinks there are good grounds to do so. Why does Rauch assume that any claim of privileged access to truth must be itself taken on faith?

Rauch would probably respond in this way. The empirical rule of science requires that "only the experience of no one in particular" be considered in assessing claims to knowledge. "In other words, in checking—deciding what is worth believing—particular persons are interchangeable" (pp. 52–53, emphasis removed). Thus, claims that individuals have had special religious experiences that give them access to truth can be dismissed, since not everyone can have such experiences. So much for Paul on the road to Damascus.

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Rauch has accomplished something altogether remarkable with his "empirical rule." He has eliminated much of history. How can the statement "George Washington did not believe in entangling alliances," for example, be checked by the experiences today of interchangeable people? The statement appears to make inexpungable reference to the thought of one very particular person. Should all claims to knowledge of historical statements that mention an individual's thoughts be thrown out because of Rauch's "empirical rule"?

Why can't someone believe both that those who know the truth should decide what is right and that these ideas should stand exposed to public criticism?

Further, Rauch has not shown that all claims to superior access to truth rest on non-interchangeable experiences. What if someone is much better at reasoning things out than others? (Assume this has been confirmed by following the empirical rule). Is it all right to let *him* decide what is right?

The problems with Rauch's assault on the Fundamentalist Principle have just begun. Why need a supporter of the principle oppose Rauch's Liberal Principle? That is to say, why can't someone believe *both* that those who know the truth should decide what is right and that these ideas should stand exposed to public criticism?

Rauch's rejoinder can easily be imagined. If someone is guaranteed to know the truth, why listen to criticism of him? What he says goes. Indeed; but this misses an elementary point. You can't both believe that what someone says is true and that a criticism of what he says is right. But why must the former belief automatically suppress the latter? Perhaps after you hear the counterargument you will stop believing that what the oracle says is true.

Brian Tierney has shown in *The Origins of Papal Infallibility* that infallibility was used by dissident Spiritual Franciscans to criticize the Pope. Since the true Pope was infallible, but so-and-so had fallen into manifest error, *he* could not be the true Pope. Hardly what one would expect from Rauch's historical caricature of the Middle Ages!

Whatever one thinks of the Fundamentalist Principle, though, Rauch has failed to raise a point relevant to free speech. Unless his benighted fundamentalists in some way act against those who do not

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accept the truth, why is there a problem about free speech at all? Perhaps, if Rauch is right, fundamentalists too readily believe propositions for which evidence is lacking; but unless they interfere with others who do not share their convictions, free speech lies in no danger from them.

No doubt some fundamentalists do wish to block dissent; but belief that you have the truth is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for anti-free speech measures. Not sufficient: suppose a principle one claimed to know is that free speech should not be violated. And not necessary: Rauch, who disclaims special access to the truth, seem quite willing to sweep under the rug ideas such as creationism which he thinks lack merit. Admittedly, he would not impose criminal sanctions on those who favor them: but those who profess ideas he dislikes *can* be "marginalized". and excluded from teaching positions.

But have we not been too severe with Rauch? Isn't criticism of our opinions an excellent idea? Who can reasonably object to the Liberal Principle? Who, indeed? As stated, the principle is vacuous. What constitutes effective criticism? The principle does not tell us, leaving the most strident authoritarian free to accept it. All he need do is specify acceptable criticism as he wishes: e.g., "anything that differs with what Big Brother has said is *ipso facto* false." Rauch has endeavored to plug this loophole with his "empirical rule," with results we have already had occasion to see.

And a less academic point also tells against Rauch's Liberal Principle. What important group has ever disallowed criticism? Medieval Islamic theologians? The Soviet Communist Party? Both were marked by furious debates. These groups, and many others, have of course crushed some kinds of dissent; but that is a far cry from the absence of criticism that Rauch fears. Rauch might say that debate among theologians, e.g., does not meet the terms of his Liberal Principle. What he wants is criticism open to everyone, unbound by limits fixed in advance. But Rauch utterly fails to show that unlimited criticism is needed to advance truth. Why not, for all he has shown to the contrary, just enough criticism to prevent stagnation? And who is to say that an elite will necessarily fall short of this goal?

The term "fundamentalist" usually is applied to religious believers, but Rauch includes considerably more in its embrace. He has discovered a new variety of fundamentalists, those who believe that theoretical arguments conclusively show the desirability of the free market. "Another man . . . told me [Rauch] that *serious* economists knew that the minimum wage

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throws poor people out of work and cuts off the bottom rung of the ladder. I mentioned that quite a lot of people, including a lot of supposedly serious economists, had concluded that the minimum wage helps people, on balance. . . . He replied that if a study shows that red is really black, it is not a credible study, or it has overlooked something" (p. 91).

No doubt some fundamentalists do wish to block dissent; but belief that you have the truth is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for anti-free speech measures.

I have quoted this passage at some length, as it makes clear Rauch's own intellectual dogmatism. As everyone but Rauch knows, there is a simple but strong argument that minimum wage laws cause unemployment. If you accept the argument, and believe it renders questionable empirical studies that claim to contradict it, then, in Rauch's view, you stand condemned as a fundamentalist.

But why is one guilty of intellectual sin if one is more reluctant than Rauch to abandon a strong theory? Rauch himself seems quite willing to dismiss accounts of "paranormal" phenomena that contravene *his* theory of how the world works (pp. 54–55). Evidently, to qualify as a believer in liberal science, you must adopt Rauch's opinions, giving them (no doubt within limits he would be happy to specify) just the empirical weight that he does.

It is not enough for Rauch to give us a philosophical justification for freedom. He also offers an unusual version of the history of philosophy. He holds, following Karl Popper, that the ideal state that Plato depicted in the *Republic* is totalitarian. (Never a hint, of course, that this interpretation is controversial.)

"What makes the whole massive totalitarian machine possible is the view of knowledge which undergirds it. Plato believed what so many of us instinctively believe: that the way to produce knowledge is to sit down in a quiet spot and think clearly. . . . Liberalism holds that knowledge comes only from a public process of critical exchange, in which the wise and unwise alike participate" (p. 33).

The unwary reader will conclude from this that Plato did not think criticism essential to philosophical knowledge. The very reverse is the case: the process of dialectical reasoning lies at the essence of Plato's philosophy. Has

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Rauch ever reflected on what Plato meant by calling knowledge "justified true belief?" But since he incredibly equates Plato's Forms with the external world, perhaps it is better that he not reflect on Plato any more at all (p. 36).

Rauch rightly protests against university speech codes, which proscribe views and expressions liable to hurt the feelings of women or assorted minority groups. Yet even his argument against those he terms Humanitarians lacks cogency. He maintains that since the purpose of a university is the advancement of knowledge, those hurt by so-called hate speech must put up with their injured feelings. This is the price of intellectual advance.

Far be it from me to defend political correctness, but why must the advancement of knowledge be accorded unconditional primacy? (I here grant for the sake of argument that complete free speech does best advance knowledge.)

What if the defender of PC willingly gives up a slight possibility of new knowledge in return for avoiding a great deal of hurt feelings? What has Rauch to say against this, other than that his "faith" in liberal science directs him to choose otherwise? The best contribution Rauch could make to freedom of thought and speech is to abandon at once further work on the subject. ❖

Come One, Come All?

ALIEN NATION: COMMON SENSE ABOUT AMERICA'S IMMIGRATION DISASTER
Peter Brimelow
Random House, 1995, xix + 327 pp.

The customary approach to immigration by libertarians has been a simple one. No restrictions on freedom of entry into a country (or exit from it) can be justified; as Robert Bartley's Constitutional Amendment has it, "There shall be no borders" (p. 140). Peter Brimelow challenges this view in *Alien Nation* and in doing so raises fundamental issues of political theory.

Brimelow begins by building a *prima facie* case that current immigration to the United States does indeed pose a problem. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments, according to supporters such as Senator Edward Kennedy, intended to bring about no drastic change in the American population. Quite the contrary, the new legislation sought to remedy the alleged inequities of the 1920s national origins system. Supporters of the reform, including President Lyndon Johnson, castigated those who

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predicted an inundation from the Third World as alarmists.

The alarmists have turned out to be right. "*Every one* of Senator Kennedy's assurances has proven false. Immigration levels *did* surge upward. They *are* now running at around a million a year, not counting illegals. Immigrants *do* come predominantly from one area—some 85 percent of the 16.7 million legal immigrants arriving in the United States between 1968 and 1993 came from the Third World" (p. 77, emphasis in original).

In contrast to past eras, when immigrants spurned the label "hyphenated-American," many newcomers avow their contempt for the existing order.

Brimelow skillfully deflates efforts by immigration advocates to minimize the significance of these figures. True, as a percentage of the U.S. population, the Great Surge of 1900–1910 in immigration exceeded the influx of the 1980s and 1990s. But the new groups have a higher birthrate than that of the white ethnic stock that predominated until 1965; and, to an unprecedented extent, few of the new entrants return to their native countries. Brimelow, a master of explaining statistics in clear fashion, uses two charts, the Wedge and Pincers, to show the radical impact of post-1965 immigration. By 2050, according to Census Bureau estimates, non-Hispanic whites will cease to be a majority of the population, should present immigration trends continue.

Arguments that deny the present danger because American society has assimilated successfully vast numbers of immigrants fail to impress our author. In the past, waves of immigration have been followed by "great lulls": the period from 1920–1940, for example, saw a massive drop in immigrants. But, since the 1965 legislation, no period of digestion seems in sight for the new arrivals to be Americanized.

And do our new entrants even wish to be Americanized? In contrast to past eras, when immigrants spurned the label "hyphenated-American," many newcomers avow their contempt for the existing order. "Groups like the campus-based MEChA . . . are openly working for Aztlan, a Hispanic-dominated political unit to be carved out of the Southwest and (presumably) reunited with Mexico" (p. 194).

Further, and here Brimelow broaches the most controversial point of his provocative book, past immigrants came mainly from

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Europe; in 1950, the U.S. population was about 90% white. If whites from Southern and Eastern Europe did manage, with substantial difficulty, to become absorbed into the majority culture by the 1960s, does it follow that vast numbers from Asia, Latin America, and Africa can do so as well? Brimelow thinks not: he fears that the growth of racial enclaves will polarize the United States into what an earlier writer of similar views termed "clashing tides of color."

Brimelow fears that the growth of racial enclaves will polarize the United States into what an earlier writer of similar views termed "clashing tides of color."

Absent decisive action, the trends that Brimelow fears will almost certainly continue and worsen. Once residents in the country, immigrants find it quite easy to bring their relatives to our shores under very liberal "family reunification" provisions of the law. And, once granted citizenship, relatives may be imported with even greater facility. As if this were not enough, enormous number of illegal immigrants (perhaps 2-3 million temporarily and 3-500,000 permanently per year in the early 1990s), have arrived here. And, by the terms of the Fourteenth Amendment, any child born in the United States, regardless of his or her parents' status, at once attains citizenship. The new citizen may now bring in, quite legally, more relatives, and so on in an ever-repeating cycle.

But the dire picture that Brimelow paints once more returns us to the question posed at the outset: Why is the situation just described a problem? What, if anything, is wrong with an ethnically diverse society? Leftists, including the libertarian variety, will dismiss Brimelow as a racist; and are not advocates of the free market committed to the unhampered movement of people across artificially drawn political divisions? Julian Simon has argued on many occasions that immigration promotes prosperity: those who prophesy otherwise, he thinks, are doomsayers along the lines of the radical environmentalists.

Brimelow's case rests on no claims of genetic inferiority of Third World immigrants. "There are quite enough reasons to worry about immigration without using Herrnstein and Murray's work [*The Bell Curve*]. Would-be demagogues should note that I do not so

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use it here" (p. 56). What, then, is his complaint?

He maintains that a nation is constituted by a common ethnic heritage: sufficiently diversify a country racially and you cease to have a nation. "The word 'nation' is derived from the Latin *nescare*; to be born. It intrinsically implies a link by blood. A nation in a real sense is an extended family" (p. 203). By advancing this definition, Brimelow commits himself neither to saying that *all* residents of a nation must be of the same race nor to asserting that those of the dominant group should have more political rights than others. But the Universal Nation of Ben Wattenberg and his cohorts is a contradiction in terms: a nation of its essence partakes of the particular. (Incidentally, Brimelow I think errs in seeing his own characterization of nation as like that of Senator Moynihan. Neither is a sufficient or necessary condition of the other [p. 203].)

But again, our question recurs: why does this matter? If Brimelow is right, a society with "too much" ethnic diversity does not constitute a nation. So what? Why should one concern oneself about what appears an argument from definition? Do we not know, as libertarians, that the basis of social order is the rights of individuals, not the supposed conditions on which a collective entity rests?

Brimelow's argument will not so readily go away. If you say to him, "I am no nationalist: I do not care whether a nation, in your sense, exists," his reply will jar your complacency. "The free market necessarily exists within a societal framework. And it can function only if the institutions in that framework are appropriate. . . . Some degree of ethnic and cultural coherence may be among these preconditions" (p. 175, emphasis removed). Brimelow calls history to witness that societies have never successfully continued for long with the degree of ethnic mixing that the 1965 Act has brought about. His case does not at all depend on acceptance of his own vigorous brand of nationalism.

Rather, his argument against libertarian free-immigrationists takes this form: should you open the borders in the way you desire, you will destroy the free society that you advocate. His criticism, then, is that free immigration is a self-defeating position, to use Derek Parfit's term in his *Reasons and Persons*.

But what of the economic advantages of immigration? Does not free movement across borders promote the international division of labor? Brimelow responds by drawing a vital distinction. The circumstances that obtain in a complete free market differ altogether from those of a welfare state.

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Those who enter the United States education at taxpayers' expense; further, they often at once count in affirmative action quotas, thus securing for themselves preferred employment. Hardly the free market in action!

What of the economic benefits of an increased number of workers?

And what of the economic benefits of an increased number of workers? Brimelow does not altogether deny their existence; but, following the calculations of George Borjas rather than those of Julian Simon, he suggests that they have no great importance. As Borjas sees matters, much of the gains that come from an increased number of workers go to the immigrants themselves; a good part of the remainder of the gains goes to capital by depressing the level of wages. I think it worth noting, though, that not only capitalists but consumers benefit from reduced labor costs.

Brimelow uses a philosophically interesting argument in building his case for immigration reform. He asks, what happens if, respectively, his and his critics' policies are applied but turn out badly? If he has erred, we have forfeited the benefits of a certain amount, probably small, of economic growth. If his critics are wrong, we have taken a giant step toward national suicide. If we are uncertain what to do, should we not avoid the action that threatens the most harm? Here Brimelow's work intersects with the contention of many decision theorists that, in a situation of uncertainty, one should primarily act to avoid the worst possible outcome. An argument like Brimelow's, though deployed to very different political ends, plays a large part in Rawls' *Theory of Justice*. (Pascal's wager is a variant of the same line of thought.)

Peter Brimelow's skill in exposition conceals the magnitude of his achievement. Behind the smooth and easy flow of his prose lies a penetrating grasp of the literature of history, economics, demography, and political theory relevant to his inquiry.[1] Brimelow's analysis, and the distinctive nationalist point of view which it expresses, contribute in a bold and original way to the debate on immigration. Those who wish to argue with him must contend with a born polemicist, who has been careful to anticipate counterarguments.

[1]One minor historical slip: Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* does *not* contain a "famous lament for the executed Queen Marie Antoinette" (p. 275). ❖

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